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The First Plymouth Marriage

and

Other Events

RALPH H. SHAW

THE
First Plymouth Marriage
and
Other Poems

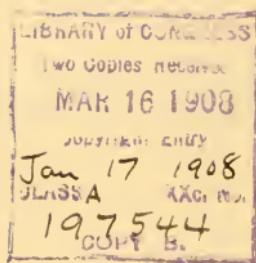
By

RALPH H. SHAW

Author of "IN MANY MOODS," "LEGEND OF THE
TRAILING ARBUTUS AND OTHER
POEMS," etc.



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1907.



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TO MY FRIEND AND PASTOR
REV. DR. R. A. GREENE

This little volume is affectionately inscribed.

Friend beloved, in whom I find
Attributes of heart and mind
Making Christian manhood real,
Something more than an ideal,—
I rejoice that I may be
Often in thy walks with thee,
When thou turn'st from book and pen
In thy prayerful work for men,
Unto Nature, for the good
Found in some cathedral wood;
By some fountain, pure and free,
In its leafy baptistry;
Or upon some hilltop high
In the blue dome of the sky.
I am grateful evermore
For thy words of love and lore;
For thy blessed influence
On my life of soul and sense;
For the measure that thou giv'st
Of the light wherein thou liv'st,
Thou who seest the love divine
Making everywhere its sign,
Reassured that God is even
Here on earth as there in heaven.

THE FIRST PLYMOUTH MARRIAGE.

Methinks the first of Plymouth marriages
Was an event whereof the Muse may sing;
There was no pomp—no bells, no carriages—
But oh! there was the songful sky of spring
With all the charms that Flora's footsteps bring.
And hearts rejoiced—so great was their delight
To see so much of sadness vanishing—
When Edward Winslow, he thrice governor hight,
Took to his heart and hearth the much-loved
Susan White.

Widowed their first New England winter in,
Alike bereft, they had by sympathy
Been drawn together; both alike had been
Oft seen by all in Plymouth Colony
To look thro' tears about them,—at the sea
That dashed its foam against the wintry shore,
The forest dark with deepening mystery,
And the wild sky that desolated more
The spot where their farewells had mixed with
ocean's roar.

"It was not long, not long ago," said he
To Susan in their courtship, 'that my wife,
Elizabeth,—of blessed memory,—
Departed in the peace of God this life;
And on Cole's Hill, that now with flowers rife
Looks with a different aspect o'er the bay
That has forgotten now its stormy strife
With wind and rock, I did her body lay,
Sincerely mourning her, which no one can gainsay.

"If little Plymouth," said he, looking down
Its hut-built street that tumbled to the sea,
"Had leisure for mere gossip, like a town
With little to accomplish, not in me
Resolve to wed so soon again would be,
For prudence then would not the step permit.
Here I o'erlook what the society
Of Leyden or our London would deem fit,
And offer you my hand with all my heart in it."

"Edward—for there exists what gives me right
To call you Edward—you are good and wise
And much consulted," answered Susan White.
"I know that Plymouth, looking thro' your eyes
At many things, will see what wisdom lies
In what to you as the best course appears
For your content beneath these alien skies;
It will not hold small grief is in your tears,
But your resolve command and wish you happy
years.

"Are we not young? Have I not children—one
The first-born of our little colony—
That should have greater strength to lean upon
For many years than mine, dear friend, can be?
My husband's and their father's memory
I cherish; but is not my widowhood
O'er-burdened with a strange anxiety
Here where is need of constant fortitude
And few of us may keep our first heroic mood?

"But it is love far more than selfishness
That leads me, Edward Winslow, to accept
Your hand with your heart in it; for not less
I love you than you love me who have kept
A tender thought of you since first we wept
In like bereavement, by this hearth of mine,
Who saw not in the shadow that had crept
Across our lives, more of the will divine
Than now we see in what makes MY heart yours,
yours mine."

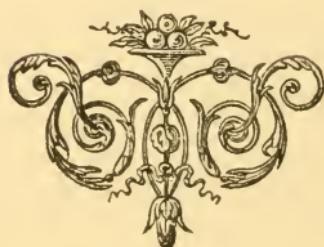
Then leading in procession the whole town,
They went before the magistrate, and he
Without prayer book or ring, in wig and gown,
United them with such formality
As satisfied all those who came to see
Their wedding, first of Plymouth marriages,
Much talked of later by the colony,
As an event of pleasant memories,
So simple and so plain, graced with love's sanctities.

The day was fair, and in the Plymouth woods
The robin and the bluebird sang of Spring
Those lilted lays that charm the solitudes,
And hope and courage to the saddest bring
And rapture to the happiest,—such as sing
In their sunshiny hearts, as on this day
Sang Edward and his sweet bride, wondering
If Spring or love had made the earth so gay,
If Spring or love had graced the shores of Plymouth Bay.

We follow them adown their many years;
We see them honored and beloved by all;
We see them blest, albeit oft their tears
For their loved dead on lonely Cole's Hill fall;
And we rejoice, who now that day recall
When they were wedded and the sun burst thro'
Clouds that had troubled many, saddened all,
That the first wedding little Plymouth knew
United hearts that were so noble and so true.

Note.—"The first marriage in the Colony occurred May 22, 1621. Edward Winslow had been a widower only seven weeks, and Susanna White a widow not twelve weeks; but the case was exceptional. What would be indecorous in an older community was here proper and desirable. Winslow should be at the head of a household, and the White children needed a paternal guardian, especially as their mother was occupied with the care of an infant. The marriage proved fortunate for

all concerned. Among Mrs. Winslow's subsequent children was Josiah, whom fifty-two years later she saw the first native governor of an American colony; thus she was the mother of the first white child in New England, the wife of one governor and the mother of another."—Goodwin, *The Pilgrim Republic*.



THE BALLADIST AT THE LAKE.

'Tis moonrise,—and the highlands,
The lake and all its islands,
 Look wilder for the singing
 Of the lady at my side.
She sings of lofty towers,
She sings of lattice bowers,
 Of knights that won fair ladies
 Or in combat for them died.

She sings of barons arming
To save their daughters charming,
 Of pages bringing tidings
 That are full of weal or woe.
She sings of love and rapture,
She sings of flight and capture,
 Of duels fought by rivals
 As they fought them long ago.

And lo! a darkly frowning
Old tower now is crowning
 The highest hill that rises
 From the border of the lake;
And now there is a flashing
Of swords together clashing
 Where moonbeams pierce the shadows,
 Which is all for love's dear sake.

And now a white-robed rider,
With him she loves beside her,
 Is pausing where the mist-wraith
 Lingers long beneath the moon.
What is it they are fearing?
What is it they are hearing?
 Is it a far-off bugle
 Or the trumpet of the loon?

Oh, what a wild confusion
Of thoughts born of illusion
 And the romantic singing
 Of the lady at my side!

And oh, what blissful dreaming
Wherein I have been seeming
A happy knight of old time
In the presence of his bride!

THE IDEAL.

The far-off hills are flushed with morn
While once again we list
To her who was a singer born,—
Our sweet-lipped balladist.

She brings the feudal cycle back,
She builds the castle here,
And these wild scenes no longer lack
Romance's atmosphere.

She sees above the lonely lake
The eagle dip his wings,
And tenderer her accents make
The ballad that she sings.

My father is a baron bold,
And stony is his eye;
He keeps me in his castle old,
With maids that hover nigh;
And tells me oft of carlish men,
Of gallants full of guile,
Of ladies led to moor and fen
By some unearthly wile.

Arise, fair day, arise, and make
A happy maid of me!
Bring o'er the hills, bring o'er the lake,
The lad I long to see!
Who comes with such a gentle mien
In dreams by night and day,
Where oft upon his arm I lean
And wend with him away.

O, let him shame the armored knights
That darker make these halls!
Upon his face, which manhood lights,
No visor's shadow falls;

No gauntlet hides his guiltless hand,
No sword is at his side;—
Oh, what a stain is on the land
Where none like him abide!

Arise, fair day, arise, and make
A happy maid of me!
Bring o'er the hills, bring o'er the lake,
The lad I long to see!
And let me at his side forsake
These shadows damp and dim!
And let him from these pale lips take
The kiss I offer him!

THE FLIGHT.

Sir John has haunted, haunted long,
The woods of Haddon Hall;
Alone has seen the mornings rise,
Alone the evenings fall.
Sir John has waited, waited long,
Still patient of delay,
To press the hand of Dorothy
And ride with her away.

O, shall he wait in vain tonight,
When Haddon Hall is gay,
Enlivened by a merrymake
That will not cease till day;
When boards are spread, when cups are filled,
When light the dance goes round,
And ever and anon to him,
Comes laughter's echoed sound?

He looks, he listens. Mirth has made
Her watchers careless all,
And lo! he sees his love at last
Escape from Haddon Hall,—
Steal lightly from the ivied door
Across the terrace old,
And glimmer down the glimmering steps
With feet that grow more bold.

She falls into his outstretched arms,
She mounts his horse with him,
And rides away with smiles whose ray
Makes e'en the moonlight dim;
And gaining breath, to him she saith,—
A saying she has heard,—
"Too closely none can watch the cage
When love's the captive bird."

AT GRETNA GREEN.

Arise, honest blacksmith!
We stop not for you
Thus early to fit
Or to fasten a shoe;
Your bellows to blow
Or your hammer to swing;
But straightway to wed us—
And here is the ring.

Make haste, honest blacksmith!
The morning is here;
The east is a-blush
Like a blossoming brere;
And we would be riding
The same happy pace
That brought us both here
With the dew on our face.

* * * * *

Now take of our gold
For your service well done,
And take what you will,
For our thanks you have won.
How needless the strength
That we see in your hands,
To forge, honest blacksmith,
The strongest of bands!

A baron will mutter,
And gather his brow;
What more can that baron,
Pray tell us, do now?
Ere long he'll forgive all
For his and our sake,
And shared be his castle
That looks o'er the lake.

SPRING.

Who does not love
The nymph called Spring,
So sweet the kiss
Her pure lips bring,
So delicate
She is, and fair,
With azure eyes
And sunny hair?

Behold her, light
As Ariel,
In veils as fine
As ever fell
O'er beauty in
The artist's dream,
By misty wood
Or willowy stream!

Anemones
And violets—
Which not a heart
That loves forgets—
Arise where'er
Her footsteps fall,
And tender skies
Bend over all.

A LILT.

I heard a bird,
At break of day,
Repeat its sweet,
Sweet roundelay.

Methought I ought
To know its art,
Because I was
As blithe at heart.

"O, now learn how,"
I heard it say,
"As well to tell
Your heart today;

"That one by none
In grace surpast,
The weal you feel
May know at last!"

Then o'er once more,
To teach its way,
It sung or rung
Its roundelay;

But, oh! to know
How I would sing,
My dear must hear
Its carolling.

A SPRING INVITATION.

Come, my dear friend, and let us go
Across the fields together!
The air is chilly yet, I know;
But this is real spring weather.
The sky is blue, the grass is green,
The runnels all are flowing,
And here and there, by few eyes seen,
The shy spring flowers are blowing.

Come, my dear friend, and let us go
Across the fields, renewing
The pleasures that we used to know
Their winding paths pursuing,
When each and every green expanse
That we could rest our eyes on,
Was ours, as by inheritance
As broad as our horizon!

Come, my dear friend, and let us go
Across the fields as gaily
As when we were too young to know
That time would rob us daily!
The sky is blue, the grass is green,
The runnels all are flowing,
And here and there, by few eyes seen,
The shy spring flowers are blowing.

IDLESSE.

Here at the lake
My ease I take
When all the hills are hazy;
I like to be
Where I can see
So much that looks so lazy.

Beneath this pine
Few thoughts are mine
Of life—its gains or losses;
No more to me
Is destiny
Than to these ferns and mosses.

I ask no why
Or wherefore; I
Am full of calm reliance;
I would not look
Through any book
For any bit of science.

Nor do I care
How doctrines fare,
Religious or politic;
What questions great
Vex church or state
And make the world a critic.

Out on the cause
That wants new laws,
New creeds and such inventions!—
I would not hear
What fills the ear
In senates or conventions.

And so I take
Here at the lake,
When all the hills are hazy,
My fill of ease
And, as I please,
My share of being lazy.

MY BALLADIST.

How sweet in all her ways is she
Who sings me songs of chivalry—
Of love, romance and courtesy—
As, pausing oft, we wander by
Her lake where birchen shadows lie
In marges that repeat the sky!

She sings them all so well, I see
Their wildly castled scenery,
Their towers looking down on me;
And I become her knight and bear
Within my heart her image fair,
All deeds for her to do and dare.

She knows they have a charm for me,
Assured that I was born to be
Alive to olden balladry;
But deeply would she blush to know
How much to her pure lips they owe,—
Her eyes that glance and cheeks that glow.

TO THE WITCH OF WENHAM.

Quos poetae celebraverunt vivunt semper.

O Witch of Wenham! a witch are you
As much today as in days of old;
Still in your eyes is the heaven's blue,
Still in your hair is the sunset's gold.

Unchanged is the charm that youth was taught
To beware in you, by Wenham side,
When beauty so fair as yours was thought
To be with an evil soul allied.

Draw near to me in this dreamy hour,
With all your beauty, and let me be
Under the spell of its radiant power,
Which is alone all your witchery!

Bend over me with your melting eyes!
Bend over me with your flowing hair!
For something there is that testifies
That only the good can be so fair.

INVITATION TO THE OLD HOMESTEAD.

The invitation comes again
To lay aside my busy pen;
To close my desk; to leave the town,
And seek the homestead, old and brown,
 Where I outlived my childhood.

It comes with subtle charm to me—
With something like wild fragrancy,
With something like the sound of lays
Heard long ago, through careless days,
 In meadow, field and wildwood.

It comes in homely words and few,
Describing nothing; yet anew
Presents to me the winding lane,
The long barn with its worn-out vane,
 The house with its huge chimney;
And far from these, the covered bridge,
And farther still, the piney ridge
Beyond which, in my early days,
I thought the world had other ways
 I could but fancy dimly.

Sweet invitation to return
To the old homestead and sojourn!
It does not need, thank Heaven! to be
In graphic words or flowery
 To be above declining.
No other that is ever sent,
However fine or eloquent,
So much in sweet suggestion bears
To men in noisy thoroughfares,
 Of days of peace and shining.

So—thanks to the old folks again!—
I'll lay aside my busy pen,
I'll close my desk, I'll leave the town,
And seek the homestead, old and brown,
 Where I outlived my childhood;
Forget the long year's dull routine,
Each old and uninspiring scene,
And, far from clamor and ado,
Will once again my life renew
 In meadow, field and wildwood.

MY WISH OF TODAY.

Come, my lads, and let us hie
To that deep, inverted sky,—
Wood-rimmed pond o'er which alone
You have skipped the skimming stone!

Up and down the ferny hill;
O'er the meadow; by the rill,
Let us go with equal feet,
Hearts that in full concord beat!

Let us whistle as we go;
Wake the mimics that you know,
Who have learned what rocks and woods
Echo in wild neighborhoods!

Let me find I have the key,
Nay, the Open Sesame,
To your world with sunshine lit,
In my wish to enter it!

IN OCTOBER.

I walk again with Autumn,
Walk once again with Autumn,
 Along this wooded way,
Where slantwise falls the sunshine,
The softly golden sunshine,
 Upon her garments gay.

Not hers the signs of mourning,
The sombre signs of mourning;
 But hers the mourning heart:
There is a subtile something,
A vague, pathetic something,
 That does this truth impart.

I look on her in sorrow,
In mute, responsive sorrow,
 Which I more deeply feel
Because she is not seeking,
By any token seeking,
 Her sorrow to reveal.

And as I walk in musing,
Walk here with her in musing,
 This truth returns to me:
Do not parade your sorrow,
If you would gain in sorrow
 Sincerest sympathy.

A LITTLE LAD AND I.

A little lad and I
 Together walked one day,
Where we could look over dull brown vales
 To blue hills far away.

'Twas autumn, and the leaves
 Had fallen all around,
And with the wind from the tree-tops bare
 There came a wintry sound.

We paused where birds had been—
 The songful summer birds:
My thoughts were sad; but the little lad
 Spake only happy words.

We paused where flowers had been—
 The light of woodland nooks:
My thoughts were sad; but the little lad
 Wore only happy looks.

I blest him from my heart,
 And wished that I could be
As much to self that is summer-like
 As all that day was he.

And now, whenever I
 That autumn walk recall,
It is his words and his looks that I
 Remember best of all.

A PASTORAL SIGHT.

O that I well could tell you—you who see
A beauty in the simple pastoral mode
Of living, and would take up your abode
Where there is yet a quiet Arcady—
What saw I in our city, that to me
A city seemed no longer, when last glowed
Our steepled sky with sunset! By that road
That here and there recalls a century,
A little girl sat on an old stone wall,
In pensive quiet, watching a few sheep
That slowly drifted in the slantwise light
And cast long shadows, tranquilizing all.
She watched them with affection that was deep,
And ne'er saw I a sweeter pastoral sight.

"OLD MAN OF THE MOUNTAIN."

(An Impression.)

Till God shall change, in His good time, thy fate,
Thou must resist a mighty force, or be
Forever fallen. Uncomplainingly
Thou dost thy task perform, and so await
Divine deliverance. Thy faith is great,
Thy patience without limit. O that we
Had faith, had patience, no necessity
Of these our lives could find inadequate!
Who shall behold thee, calm as the still heaven,
Though suffering like the Titan of old time,
Resist that force that, from thy mountain wall,
To hurl thee headlong hath for ages striven,
And yet not feel how grand, ay, how sublime
Is faith, is patience, that endureth all?

"A PASTORAL."

How pleasant in this noisy town to see,
Beside the dusty highway and where fall
The shadows cast by towers and steeples tall,
This old farm lingering like a memory!
A pastoral I call it; may it be
So called by others till its old stone wall,
Its orchard and its garden croft, with all
Its sounds and sights of happy husbandry,
Have passed away, or Time's tooth, never dull,
With indiscriminate activity
Has gnawed its ancient buildings to the ground!
I turn to it because 'tis beautiful—
This poem of a saner century,
That in the midst of so much prose is found.

ROBIN'S HILL.

How often in the early morningtide—
When, half awake but with accustomed ear,
We, in our streets, the first milk wagons hear
Arriving from the grassy countryside—
A vision comes to me of pastures wide
On airy hillsides, scattered farmsteads near,
Bathed in a fresh and dewy atmosphere
And by the touch of morning beautified!
And Oh, how often ere it fades away,
I seem to be where Pan invites me oft
From his pure springs to drink again my fill,
Beholding with what beauty breaks the day
Where mellow lowings rise, and sweet and soft
The redbreast carols over Robin's Hill!

ABOUT THE SEA.

O, let me read a book about the sea,
This summer day, among these inland hills,
Forgetful of the visible heat that fills
This windless air so unremittingly!
A book that shall be as a beach to me,
Where break the billows rolling far and wide,
A salted wind, a rising, joyous tide,
O'ercoming all my languid lethargy;
Or even as a handful of the flowers,
The moss and fern, whose garden is the deep,
From dripping rocks and caverns freshly
brought;
For, look about you! drouth's gray dust is ours
And all our hills a hazy dulness keep,
While nothing here refreshes life or thought.

COLUMBUS.

Columbus hath been walking by the sea,
And making lonely footprints on its sand,
Imagining a western way to land
That lieth eastward; and now fervently,
By his great thought uplifted, prayeth he
For ships to sail the waters that expand
Below the verge whence setting suns command
Their solemn and far-reaching mystery.
God hath been with him when he seemed alone,
And spoken to him somewhat till, today,
He turns his whole soul toward the occident.
He is inspired for work to him unknown:
Not his to find a western ocean way
To Asia, but another continent!

ELDER FAUNCE.

1646-1745.

We, who of Pilgrim relics treasures make,
Too little honor Faunce's memory.
But for his act, unknown to us would be
Forefathers' Rock. He on himself did take
When it was much imperiled, for the sake
Of saving it to all posterity,
The making of it known. Remembered he
What unto him the Pilgrim Fathers spake
Concerning it so oft before they died,
When early in his life with them he stood
Beside it, on the bleak and barren shore;
And, bowed with age, came and identified
This sacred relic, midst a multitude
That praised his act and heard his voice no more.

BIRTHDAY GREETING.

April 29, 1887.

Dear sister, I am mindful of the day,
And many are my wishes that it be
As fair and gentle as thou art to me:
Nor mist, nor shadow, but the mildest ray
Of April, I would have upon thy way,
With airs that breathe of blossoms. I would see
As much of grace in Nature as in thee,
To whose young heart my own I closely lay.
I watch the eastern sky; I question all
The winds that come thus early in the morn
If they precede what are oppressed with rain;
I hear the birds among the treetops call,
And wonder if they know the day is born
As it will pass, and full of hope remain.

TO O. W. R.

(Formerly of Billerica, now of Taunton, Mass.)

Well pleased am I that by the old mossed road
My fancy seeks thee,—through the woods and
leas

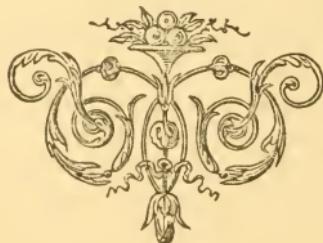
Where sings the shy thrush in full-throated ease
And wings the wild bee with its thigh-borne load;
The old mossed road that led to thine abode

In early years, when first thy melodies
Delighted me with their simplicities,
And made me wish that I might learn thy mode;—
And not, O poet! by that iron way

That draws its monstrous length through wan-
ing woods

And glistens on from busy town to town,
I must pursue to reach thy hearth today.

My fancy finds thee in old haunts and moods,
And will not let thee lay thy sweet reed down.



THE WOODED WAY.

Now let us seek that wooded way again,
Where we so oft have left the world behind
And all the common cares that weary men,
Or wear away their spirit or their mind,
If they to them are overmuch confined;
And let us make a summer of a day,
Delighting to be careless as the wind
That now, the lightest vagrant of that way,
Is whispering to the leaves or with the flowers
at play.

That wooded way abandoned long ago
By eager Haste, and now well-nigh forgot,
Is beautiful as any that we know
In song or story; and its charm is not
Less deeply felt that Genius has not taught
Minds to expect it. Birch and pine and fir,
And glimpses of idyllic landscapes caught
Through leafy vistas, with its peace concur
To make it worthy of the gifted wanderer.

We have pursued it far, by dale and down,
Nor met a single wayfarer, nor seen,
In all its mossy miles from town to town,
What would betoken any; and we ween
That it unsought from sun to sun has been,
And even when the summer's tinkling showers
Have made its leafy twilight still more green,
Or given a sweeter freshness to its bowers,
Or made more lovely still its groups of gypsy
flowers.

There sings the thrush in some secluded tree,
Where he is careless, full of rapturous ease;
There drums the unscared partridge; and if we
But listen, we may hear the hum of bees
About some hollow bole, or from the leas
Conveying their sweet harvest; and full oft
Expands o'er us a murmur like the sea's,

When on the pines that rear themselves aloft
Against the azure sky, the wind blows light and
soft.

Come, let's be off, while yet the winged day
Is rising o'er the city's eastern wall;
Come, let us seek again that wooded way
And loiter where now Time's footsteps fall
On dewy ferns and mosses, whither call
The spirits that are in our memories
Back to us from the wild, the pastoral,
The quiet and, more deeply felt than these,
Seclusion that is peace and freedom that is ease.

THE EARLY RAIN.

I love to hear the rain encouraging
With its soft words the tender grass in spring;
It is so full of pretty promises,
So like a mother that encourages
Her little one to walk.

“O, do not fear!
Strike deep thy roots, best done when I am here;
Strike deep thy roots,” it saith, “though earth be
cold,
And thou shalt live, the violet soon behold,
The daisy and the buttercup ere long,
Under blue skies and breadths of lilted song.”

MY FRIEND AND I.

My friend and I are going out
To wander in the fields about;
But not as peeping botanists,
Nor hammering geologists,
Nor ornithologists; but just
As men who like to brush the dust
Of beaten ways from off their feet
And tread among the grasses sweet,

Where beauty has its only bound
In the horizon circling round.
So, when we have come back again,
We shall not talk, like learned men,
Like scientists with curious minds,
Of species, specimens or kinds;
But tell you how, with sweet surprise,
Some floral beauty filled our eyes;
Or how some bird, with lilted song,
Delighted us and held us long;
Or how some rock's cool shadow lay
On mosses, dialing the day;
Or of some far, idyllic bit
Of landscape for a canvas fit,
Some tufted wood, some purpled hill,
Some natural picture, charming still.

PAN.

Beyond the city's noisy way,
The whirl of life, I walk today,
And in this wood-rimmed sward land hear
A music that delights my ear,—
A fluting that is full of glee
And ripples like the melody
Of light winds in the beechen tree.

It is the pastoral of Pan,
Who unto me, as boy and man,
Has given that contented mood
Wherein suffices primal good
(The filling of my actual need)
To make me happy, blest indeed,
Beyond the breathing of my reed.

The wisest of the wise to me,
The best of all the gods, is he,
Who calls me from the throng and press
Of lives in needless strain and stress,
Distraught with false necessities,
To tarry in his pleasant leas
And taste with him the sweets of ease.

IN WHITTIER LAND.

A sunny hill with smoothly curved sky-line;
A silent herd of upward-grazing kine;
A lonely steeple rising far away,—
These have I seen where I have been today,
 In quiet Whittier Land.

A sunny vale with meadow, field and wood;
Still waters in a leafy solitude,
And such as lapse with lightest tones away,—
These have I seen where I have been today,
 In quiet Whittier Land.

Gray, lichenized rocks and pastoral junipers;
Cool, shadowed mosses, sombering pines and firs,
And reddening cones of sumach by the way,—
These have I seen where I have been today,
 In quiet Whittier Land.

A quaint old house with softly opened door;
A threshold passed by thoughtful pilgrims o'er,
By hearts that love the shy bard's thrush-like lay,
These have I seen where I have been today,
 In quiet Whittier Land.

ROBERT DINSMORE'S GRAVE.

There is a grave not far away
That we must visit, friend, some day.
We have neglected it too long,
As lovers of the Scottish lay,
The simple and sincere in song.
Within it sleeps that rustic bard,
Large-hearted and of Scotch descent,
Who, while above his plow he bent
Or rested from his labors hard,
Sang Burns-like in this land of ours,
In this New England atmosphere,
As if he saw the azure flowers
And purple hills of Scotland here,
Or that wild brook that wandered near

Were bonny Doon or gurgling Ayr,
Romantic as its vales were fair.

'Tis Dinsmore's grave, upon whose mound
Our Whittier a wreath has laid
That can not wither, no, nor fade.
'Tis in the ancient burial-ground
Of pastoral Windham, where today
The green grass trembles in the wind
As gentle as 'tis unconfined,
And the blue sky with genial ray
Calls forth the early flowers—a spot
Where Nature's hand, not Art's, has wrought
A simple beauty fit to be
About the grave of such as he,
Who sang, without a thought of art,
To nature in the human heart.

ROBERT DINSMORE.

Windham, N. H., 1758-1836.

Robert Dinsmore, rustic bard,
At his labor long and hard
Found his inspiration here,
On this hillside, by this mere,
And, a plowman all his days,
Sang in plowmen's ears his lays.

Lays of love, its smiles and tears,
Lays of home, its hopes and fears,
Plain expressions of a heart
Troubled by no thought of art,
Feeling deeply what it felt,
Melting as a heart should melt.

Pathless lies his grassy mound
In yon ancient burial-ground,
Where the cowbell tinkles low,
Piney odors come and go,
And a few wild flowers rise
Seldom seen by human eyes;

Scarcely now the lips of Fame
Here or there repeat his name,—
But the merit that was his
Hearts command with emphasis:
Honest thought and honest phrase
Charm full many nowadays.

Let about his place of rest
By our feet the grass be prest!
Let our grateful tribute be
Simple as his memory—
This unribboned bunch of flowers
Common in his day as ours!

AT MILLVALE FALLS.

What an organist we find
Plays in summer's gentle wind
 On the Falls of Millvale!
With what grace, what perfect ease,
Wakes he here and there the keys
 In the Falls of Millvale!

What allegros, sweet and bright,
Plays he o'er, with rapt delight,
 On the Falls of Millvale!
What adagios, soft and low,
While his touches pensive grow,
 On the Falls of Millvale!

How he bends above the keys,
Charmed with all the harmonies
 Of the Falls of Millvale!
Ah! that organist divine
Knows no instrument more fine
 Than the Falls of Millvale!

NOTE—These lines were written on observing the varied effect of the wind on the falls, now causing the water to flow over a portion, or portions, and now over the whole of the declivity.

THE MAPLES AND THE PINES.

Spendthrifts for a gala day,
Donned the maples garments gay
Which among the pines they wore.
They looked bright; but what had they
When the great event was o'er?

Do I think that so arrayed
Envy in the pines they made—
Envy of their new attire?
No; the pines, forever staid,
Had to match it no desire.

"Better," lisped the pines to me,
"Better, better far, to be
Clad like us throughout the year
Than to don such finery
And ere long so bare appear."

A STORY OF THE WIND.

A maple wood, with its leaves aglow,
Burned in the vale, but it burned too slow
For the Wind that down from the cold hills came
To feel the warmth of its ruddy flame.

"This fire is red," said the Wind, "but I
Can make it red as the sunset sky;
'Tis very good, but if fanned by me,
With my great wings, it will better be."

He fanned it long and he fanned it fast,
And well you know what he found at last,—
That he, foolish Wind, had fanned it out
And saddened the vale for miles about.

Ah! then he sighed o'er the darkened wood
And chid himself in regretful mood;
But never since then has he been known
To let one leafy fire alone.

THE BURIAL OF BRADFORD.

The rocky coast and the windy bay,
And the cloudy sky that hangs them o'er,
To Plymouth look, on this solemn day,
More wild and savage than e'er before.

For Plymouth now has her leader lost,
Whose heart was bravest, whose word was best;
Who gave her courage when darkly tost,
And put her doubts and her fears to rest.

She bears him now on his simple bier,
Above the rocks and the sounding surge;
She mourns for him, but she hides her tear;
She mourns for him, but she sings no dirge.

She lays him there on the hilltop bare,
With her trainband's volley o'er his grave,
And turns away with a silent prayer
That she, like him, may be strong and brave.

PLYMOUTH ROCK.

Oh, the wondrous, the All-Being!
Oh, the wondrous, the All-Seeing!—
'Twas His purpose, in the vast
Silent eons of the past,
That this boulder here should be
Unto them a stepping-stone,
Who, inspired, should cross the sea,
Here to walk with Him alone.

Guided by His mighty hand,
From its far-off native land,
In a slowly moving floe
Of a dim age, long ago,
We can see it hither come,
To its station by the sea,
Here amid the tossing foam
To fulfill its destiny.

Guided by the selfsame hand,
From their distant fatherland,
O'er a waste of unknown sea,
Into deep'ning mystery,
We can see the Pilgrims come,
Reach it with their straining oar,
And amid the tossing foam
Greet its welcome to this shore.

PLYMOUTH ROCK AND MARY CHILTON.

For us now your lips unlock,
Break your silence, Plymouth Rock!
Speak, gray witness, speak, and tell
What you still remember well
Of that maiden first to land
Of the little Pilgrim band;
Share with us your memory;
Let us Mary Chilton see!

History tells us little more
Than that she was first ashore,—
Little save her years and name;
Speak, old rock, and History shame!
Make to us her figure known,
Every charm that was her own;
Share with us your memory;
Let us Mary Chilton see!

Speak, and tell us if her face
Proved her borñ of Saxon race;
If she had as native wealth
Saxon strength and Saxon health;
If the image that we bear
In our bosom is less fair,
Is less nobly fair than she!
Let us Mary Chilton see!

THE MAYFLOWER ON BRADFORD'S GRAVE.

There was no tender tribute paid
When, custom-bound, our fathers laid
 Their leader here at rest.
Our fathers, though they deeply felt,
Austerely with their bosoms dealt
 And half their good represt.

They checked midway the rising tear,
And silently they left him here,
 Without or wreaths or flowers.
They left him with his God, we know;
But who of us would bury so
 The well-beloved of ours?

When thoughts like these were in my mind,
Oh! doubly sweet it was to find
 The Mayflower on his grave;
God's tribute, paid in tenderest way,
To him whose latest month was May
 And whose whole life was brave.

PAUL REVERE'S HORSE.

So much we have heard of Paul Revere,
Somewhat of his horse we now would hear,—
His horse whose part in his midnight ride
Should not be forgot but magnified,—
His noble horse that served him so well:
What fate was it that this horse befell?

Why is it not on the lips of Fame
What was his color and what his name;
When he was born and when he did die,
And where, like our fathers', his ashes lie;
How much he did to spread that alarm
That woke each Middlesex village and farm?

Ah! who can doubt that, waiting to ride,
His master patted and stroked his side,
Thinking how far he must pierce the night
Through sombre darkness and spectral light,
How fleet he must be, how fearless, too,
How much 'twas his for a nation to do?

Only a horse! but whenever we hear
Of the midnight ride of Paul Revere,
Let us imagine his "bulk in the dark,"
His "shape in the light," and, leaning, hark
As if to hear the sound of his feet
As they on the sands and ledges beat!

THE OLD BELFRY AT LEXINGTON.

Historic structure, many come to see!
I can but think, while contemplating thee,
That thou wouldest not look always idle down
Upon the little, picturesque, old town
Whose fame thou sharest; but wouldest take some
part
In what makes up its life, as time-worn as thou
art;

That thou wouldest have thy bell restored to thee
And heard on every anniversary
Of that great day when, from the neighboring
farms,
It called the ready minutemen to arms,
And always when, to mix with kindred clay,
Some patriotic heart is near thee laid away;

And, more, when some proud daughter or proud
son
Of the old town—may it have many a one!—
Before its altar stands with earnest face
And makes more sacred still that sacred place.
So have I thought, while contemplating thee,
And much I hope the thought in other minds
may be.

STANZAS

On Receiving the Thumb-Piece of the Old Door-Latch of the Whittier Birthplace.

“I call to mind the summer day,
The early harvest mowing,
The sky with sun and cloud at play
And flowers with breezes blowing.”

—WHITTIER.

The poet in his youth I see;
I meet him coming from the lea
Where, brown as any mower, he
Has swung his scythe today.
I seek with him his father's door;
But ere we pass its threshold o'er,
He needs must view the vale once more
Beneath the sunset ray.

He tells me that in all around,
In all by his horizon bound,
He has today a beauty found
He will remember long;
That oft today, with raptured ear,
He has delayed his scythe to hear
The blackbird on the hillside near
Repeat its summer song.

He does not know that in those hours
Just passed among the meadow flowers
The Muse to him has given powers
That shall grow more and more;
But in his looks the gift I see,
I read in them his destiny;
The poet of the years to be
Stands by me at his door.

STANZAS

Suggested by a Cottager's Letter.

The winds are bleak and cold,
That, coursing wood and wold,
Assail our cottage old,
This wintry day,—

When sharper-cut each height
Looks o'er our landscape white,
Upon our verge of sight,
 Long leagues away.

What matters it?—this storm
Of winds that rise enorm?—
We gather snug and warm
 Before our fire,
In peace of heart and mind,
Knowing that our dumb kind
A fitting shelter find
 In barn and byre.

Who now looks outdoors must
See snows, like clouds of dust,
Blown by each sudden gust
 Across the fields;
And many a blinding glare
Where falls, through the dry air,
The sun on ices bare,
 And no warmth yields.

We have not much; but see
How much today have we
That causes poverty
 To be forgot!
What coziness is found
Our humble hearth around!
Blessings to us abound
 In our own thought.

Thanks for these walls so rude!
Thanks for this fire of wood!
Thanks for each homely good,
 This wintry day!
When winds so bleak and cold,
From frozen wood and wold,
Assail our cottage old,
 And whirl away.

THE HOUSE OF TIPSY TIM.

Topsy Tim, whose kith and kin
Bore with patience his great sin,
Lived for years this old house in;
Staggered up this windy hill,
Fell across this doorway sill,
O'er and o'er again, until
Death—his friend, it was no less,—
Put an end to his excess,
Giving him its quietness.

Topsy Tim a helpmeet had,
Who, while life with love was clad,
Made his sober bosom glad;
But, alas! in after years,
Daily drying her own tears,
She grew crazy in her fears,
And when Topsy Tim had died,
Left her doors and windows wide
To the peeping countryside.

“Let the winds,” she used to say
In her wild, demented way,
“Here carouse, by night and day;
Fill these rooms with noisy rout,
Holding here their drinking bout,
Reeling in and reeling out;
Till this house, that here and there
Testifies to wear and tear,
Looks the picture of despair!”

In a way that no one knows
She at last found that repose
That was balm for all her woes;
And the winds she welcomed here
Have been blowing many a year
Through this house, with antics queer,
Wrecking it as Tim had done
Had he lived another sun:
Theirs the work by him begun!

FIFTY-EIGHT.

September 19, 1901.

The bells are tolling fifty-eight;
It is the funeral hour;
And heavier, heavier grows the weight
That God alone hath power
To lift from our sad hearts; in Him
Alone is our relief;
He knows our eyes with tears are dim
And bitter is our grief.

The bells are tolling fifty-eight,
And every knell they toll
Makes deeper felt how good and great
That calm and saintly soul
Who walked among us and confest
The Christ that walks beside,
Who gave to us his noblest, best,
And in our service died.

THE MONSTER.

I.

There is a monster in the midst of us,
And we have been so tolerant of it,
It has grown bold, protruding its sharp claws.
Worse than the worst of monsters fabulous;
So horrible there is no language fit
For its portrayal, with its hungry jaws.
It craves the blood that in our highest flows,—
The precious blood that warms the central heart
Behind our institutions and our laws;
It scents that, and its eye with hell-fire glows;—
Waking, it watches; sleeping, oft does start,
As if to glut at once its worst of maws.

II.

And now—Oh, shame upon our tolerance!—
This monster we should long ago have killed,

Has sprung, appeased its hunger, and retired,—
Though in our presence still,—with looks askance,
Like any guilty thing. What now is willed?

Are there not men among us, passion-fired,
To seek and slay the monster, as of old
The fearless god the horrid dragon slew?

Is courage wanting? Aught that is required?
Or is this monster, cowardly yet bold,
To crouch among us and to spring anew,
As if to slay it none had been inspired?

JOSEPH PUTNAM.

1692.

Here lies Joe Putnam, who did not fear
To cry "Delusion!" so all might hear,
When orthodox Salem, without the light
Whereby the scriptures are read aright,
Believed, in its dark surmise of ill,
'Twas hanging witches on Gallows Hill.

With every charge of the "evil eye,"
He gave the church and the court the lie;
And loudly laughing at threatened harm,
He stoutly shouldered his old queen's-arm,
With such defiance that he was not
For his great offence to trial brought.

The doughty hero of that dark day,
Time takes no lustre from him away,
Who prophesied all that Salem felt
When it in the light of reason knelt,
Praying forgiveness with deepening sense
Of guilt and its awful consequence.

SEEKERS OF GLOOSKAP.

A Micmac Legend.

"A very ancient or truly aboriginal tale."

—Charles Godfrey Leland.

All men were told that whoso seeks
The Master gains his wish, and lo!
Uprose two firm believers, led
By their most earnest wish, and said:
"Pray, let us to the Master go!"

They knew that he abode beyond
The mazes of the wilderness,
Through thickets they must thrid their way;
But they bore on from day to day
With little promise of success.

Then, fearful lest they miss their quest,
They climbed a hill and looked around,
And saw a graceful column rise
Slow-curling to the distant skies,
And where it rose a wigwam found.

Therein they spake with one who seemed
More than a man, so high he sat;
He bade them welcome o'er and o'er,
And they were glad to rest once more—
Limb-weary—on a wigwam mat.

The land was fair beyond compare,—
A land of meres and rivers calm,
Of meadows green and broad and long,—
A land of flowers, sun and song,
And woods whose every breath was balm.

They saw that he who welcomed them
A great magician was, for lo!
He made all burdens light, he took
From age its worn and withered look,
By magic none beside did know.

At length he asked them whom they sought;
They answered, "Glooskap," and were awed,
For he made answer, "I am he."
A glory and a majesty
Sat on him,—they had found the god.

Whereat they rose and humbly said:
"We are not loved, for we are rude,
Are quick to wrath, are given to guile,
Are prone our neighbors to revile,
But would be loved, upright and good."

The Master listened to them well,
As listens he to all who come
Before him. Then, with blessing, he
Said unto them: "So shall it be!"
And they departed, going home.

And when they had reached home again
(Where they at first by none were known),
Soon gathered round them old and young,
And in their grateful presence hung
With looks that inward pleasure own.

Thenceforth they loved and were beloved,
So changed were they and their estate;
And lo! a needful change they wrought
In others' daily life and thought,
And their reward therefor was great.

Oh! not in vain this legend now,
Which I beside my fire have told
To children in this simple way.
Repeat it to yourself today;
O'erlook its dross and prize its gold.

THE STORM LEDGE.

I climbed old Katahdin to find
That ledge—very oft in my mind—
Through which, as in story we're told,
In story now centuries old,
A hunter was led as through air,
By one who was wondrously fair,
To rest by an emberless fire,
Unharmed, in the cave of her sire,
Who sent forth his sons at his will
To battle the spirits of ill,
And straightway recalled them to rest
When they had performed his behest;
For he was the god of the storm,
The god of the tempest enorm
That flashes and crashes and fills
With tremor the vales and the hills.

I climbed all in vain; but somewhere
The crest of Katahdin must bear
What was to the Indian of old
The ledge of the legend I've told;
And thereat some climber may see
How fearful the tempest can be
About such a towering height
In all the grim blackness of night;
And hearing the wilderness roar
Around him like ocean's torn shore,
May wish some good angel would make
A cave in the ledge for his sake,
A shelter, a refuge, that he
Secure from the tempest might be,
Assured of the merciful ward—
In that terrible hour—of God.

[The ledge is described in the Passamaquoddy legend as "a high ledge like an immense wall, having a platform at its foot."]

WHY THE PARTRIDGE LIVES IN THE BUSH.

(A Passamaquoddy Legend.)

The partridge built boats for his brothers—
The bluebird, the blackbird, and others—
And built them so well that he found
They did to his credit redound.

“So well you have done,” said his brothers,
“In building staunch boats for all others,
Why don’t you, against some disaster,
Build one for yourself, worthy master?”

Then strutting around as if he
Were lord of the land and the sea,
He said, with his head lifted high,—
“The greatest boat-builder am I.

“I’ll build me a boat that shall be
A wonder, a marvel to see,
So fair and so fast, it shall seem,
To all that behold it, a dream.”

So, all he had done to outdo,
He thought out a boat wholly new,
A boat quite unique in its plan,
And straightway to build it began.

And when he had built it, he cried
To all of his brothers, with pride,—
“Lo! here is my boat;” but he found
When paddled it simply turned round!

Then full of chagrin, for he knew
His brothers saw all, he withdrew
And hid in the bush far away,
Where he has remained to this day.

THE RATTLERS.

(Passamaquoddy.)

The worst of all snakes are the rattlers,
The Passamaquoddy will say;
The rattlers, for once they were Indians
Whose impudent, impious way
Vexed Glooskap so oft that he told them
A great flood was coming and they
Would drown in its waters provided
They chose not to change and to pray.

Whereat these bold Indians grew bolder
And got out their rattles—their shells
Wherein there were pebbles—and shook them,
And danced with wild gestures and yells.
The flood came with lightning incessant,
With fury no tongue fitly tells,
And still they kept shaking their rattles,
Though earth seemed the worst of all hells.

Then Glooskap was angry and thought how
To live might be worse than to die:
He changed these bold Indians to rattlers,
And rattlers they are; you and I
Can see them, forever degraded,
Still dancing with heads lifted high;
They shake, to forewarn us, their ratties—
'Tis best not to venture too nigh.



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